

## Regulation for Mexican Gray Wolf Non-essential Experimental Population Area

Extracted From 50 CFR Ch. I (10–1–02 Edition)  
§ 17.84

(k) Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*).

(1) The Mexican gray wolf (Mexican wolf) populations reestablished in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and in the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area, if used, within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, identified in paragraph (k)(9) of this section, are one nonessential experimental population. This nonessential experimental population will be managed according to the following provisions.

(2) Based on the best available information, the Service finds that reintroduction of an experimental population of Mexican wolves into the subspecies' probable historic range will further the conservation of the Mexican wolf subspecies and of the gray wolf species; that the experimental population is not "essential," under 50 CFR 17.81(c)(2); that the experimental population is wholly separate geographically from any other wild gray wolf population or individual wild gray wolves; that no wild Mexican wolves are known to exist in the experimental population area or anywhere else; and that future migration of wild Mexican wolves into the experimental population area is not possible.

(3) No person, agency, or organization may "take" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] any wolf in the wild within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, except as provided in this rule. The Service may investigate each take of a Mexican wolf and may refer the take of a wolf contrary to this rule to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(i) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, you will not be in violation of the Act or this rule for "unavoidable and unintentional take" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] of a wolf. Such take must be non-negligent and incidental to a legal activity, such as military training and testing, trapping, driving, or recreational activities. You must report the take within 24 hours to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or to a designated representative of the Service.

(ii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, you may "harass" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] wolves that are within 500 yards of people, buildings, facilities, pets, "livestock" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], or other domestic animals in an opportunistic, noninjurious manner [see definition of "opportunistic, noninjurious harassment" in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] at any time— provided that wolves cannot be purposely attracted, tracked, searched out, or chased and then harassed. You must report harassment of wolves within 7 days to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or to a designated representative of the Service.

(iii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, excluding areas within the national park system and national wildlife refuge system, no Federal

agency or their contractors will be in violation of the Act or this rule for unavoidable or unintentional take of a wolf resulting from any action authorized by that Federal agency or by the Service, including, but not limited to, military training and testing. This provision does not exempt agencies and their contractors from complying with sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(4) of the Act, the latter of which requires a conference with the Service if they propose an action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Mexican wolf.

(iv) In areas within the national park system and national wildlife refuge system, Federal agencies must treat Mexican wolves as a threatened species for purposes of complying with section 7 of the Act.

(v) On private land anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, livestock owners or their agents may take (including kill or injure) any wolf actually “engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; provided that evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves is present; and further provided that the take is reported to the Service’s Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(vi) On tribal reservation land anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, livestock owners or their agents may take (including kill or injure) any wolf actually engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock; provided that evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves is present; and further provided that the take is reported to the Service’s Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(vii) On “public lands” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] allotted for grazing anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, including within the designated “wolf recovery areas” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], livestock owners or their agents may be issued a permit under the Act to take wolves actually engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting “livestock” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. Before such a permit is issued, the following conditions must be met—livestock must be legally present on the grazing allotment; six or more “breeding pairs” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] of Mexican wolves must be present in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area; previous loss or injury of livestock on the grazing allotment, caused by wolves, must be documented by the Service or our authorized agent; and agency efforts to resolve the problem must be completed. Permits issued under this provision will be valid for 45 days or less and will specify the maximum number of wolves you are allowed to take. If you take a wolf under this provision, evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves must be present. You must report the take to the Service’s Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(viii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, take of Mexican wolves by livestock guarding dogs, when used in the traditional manner to

protect livestock on public, tribal, and private lands, is permitted. If you become aware that such take by your guard dog has occurred, you must report the take to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(ix) Personnel authorized by the Service may take any Mexican wolf in the nonessential experimental population in a manner consistent with a Service-approved management plan, special management measure, or a valid permit issued by the Service under § 17.32. This may include, but is not limited to, capture and translocation of wolves that—prey on livestock; attack pets or domestic animals other than livestock on private or tribal land; “impact game populations in ways which may inhibit further wolf recovery” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; prey on members of the desert bighorn sheep herd found on the White Sands Missile Range and San Andres National Wildlife Refuge so long as the State of New Mexico lists it as a species to be protected; are considered “problem wolves” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; are a nuisance; endanger themselves by their presence in a military impact area; need aid or veterinary care; or are necessary for authorized scientific, research, or management purposes. Lethal methods of take may be used when reasonable attempts to capture wolves alive fail and when the Service determines that immediate removal of a particular wolf or wolves from the wild is necessary. Authorized personnel may use leg-hold traps and any other effective device or method for capturing or controlling wolves to carry out any measure that is a part of a Service-approved management plan, notwithstanding any conflicts in State or local law. The disposition of all wolves (live or dead) or their parts taken as part of a Service-authorized management activity must follow provisions in Service-approved management plans or interagency agreements or procedures approved by the Service on a case-by-case basis.

(x) As determined by the Service to be appropriate, the Service or any agent so authorized by the Service may capture, kill, subject to genetic testing, place in captivity, euthanize, or return to the wild (if found to be a pure Mexican wolf) any feral wolf-like animal, feral wolf hybrid, or feral dog found within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area that shows physical or behavioral evidence of hybridization with other canids, such as domestic dogs or coyotes; being an animal raised in captivity, other than as part of a Service-approved wolf recovery program; or being socialized or habituated to humans.

(xi) The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services WS) division will discontinue use of M-44's and choking-type snares in “occupied Mexican wolf range” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. The WS division may restrict or modify other predator control activities pursuant to a cooperative management agreement or a conference between the Service and the WS division.

(xii) You may harass or take a Mexican wolf in self defense or defense of the lives of others, provided that you report the harassment or take within 24 hours to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service. If the Service or an authorized agency determines that a wolf presents a threat to

human life or safety, the Service or the authorized agency may kill it, capture and euthanize it, or place it in captivity.

(xiii) Intentional taking of any wolf in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, except as described above, is prohibited. The Service encourages those authorized to take wolves to use nonlethal means when practicable and appropriate.

(4) You must not possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any wolf or wolf part from the experimental population except as authorized in this rule or by a valid permit issued by the Service under § 17.32. If you kill or injure a wolf or find a dead or injured wolf or wolf parts, you must not disturb them (unless instructed to do so by an authorized agent of the Service), you must minimize your disturbance of the area around them, and you must report the incident to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(5) You must not attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in this rule.

(6) No land use restrictions will be imposed on private lands for Mexican wolf recovery without the concurrence of the landowner.

(7) No land use restrictions will be imposed on tribal reservation lands for Mexican wolf recovery without the concurrence of the tribal government.

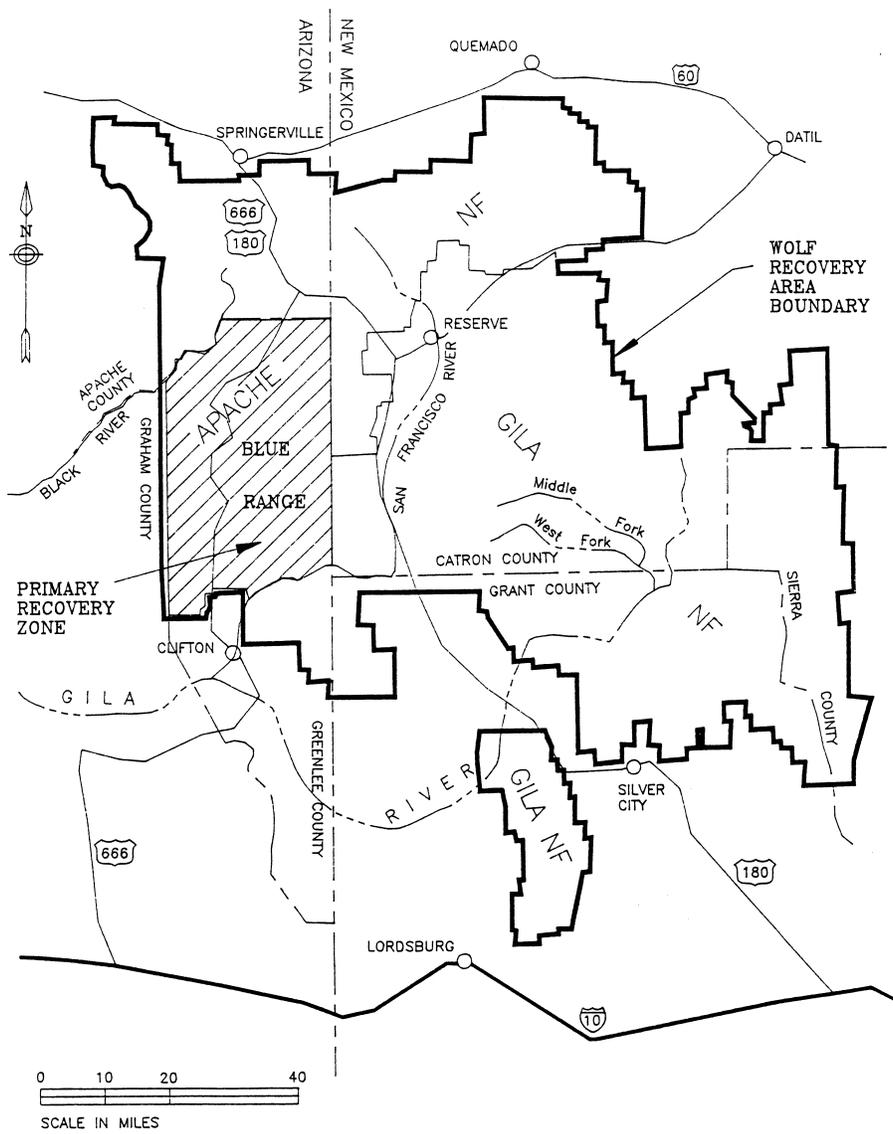
(8) On public lands, the Service and cooperating agencies may temporarily restrict human access and "disturbance-causing land use activities" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] within a 1-mile radius around release pens when wolves are in them, around active dens between March 1 and June 30, and around active wolf "rendezvous sites" [see definition in paragraph 17.84(k)(15) of this section] between June 1 and September 30, as necessary.

(9) The two designated wolf recovery areas and the experimental population area for Mexican wolves classified as a nonessential experimental population by this rule are described in the following subsections. Both designated wolf recovery areas are within the subspecies' probable historic range and are wholly separate geographically from the current range of any known Mexican wolves or other gray wolves.

(i) The Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area includes all of the Apache National Forest and all of the Gila National Forest in east-central Arizona and west-central New Mexico (Figure 1). Initial releases of captive-raised Mexican wolves will take place, generally as described in our Preferred Alternative in the FEIS on Mexican wolf reintroduction, within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area "primary recovery zone" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. This is the area within the Apache National Forest bounded on the north by the Apache-Greenlee County line; on the east by the Arizona-New Mexico state line; on the south by the San Francisco River (eastern

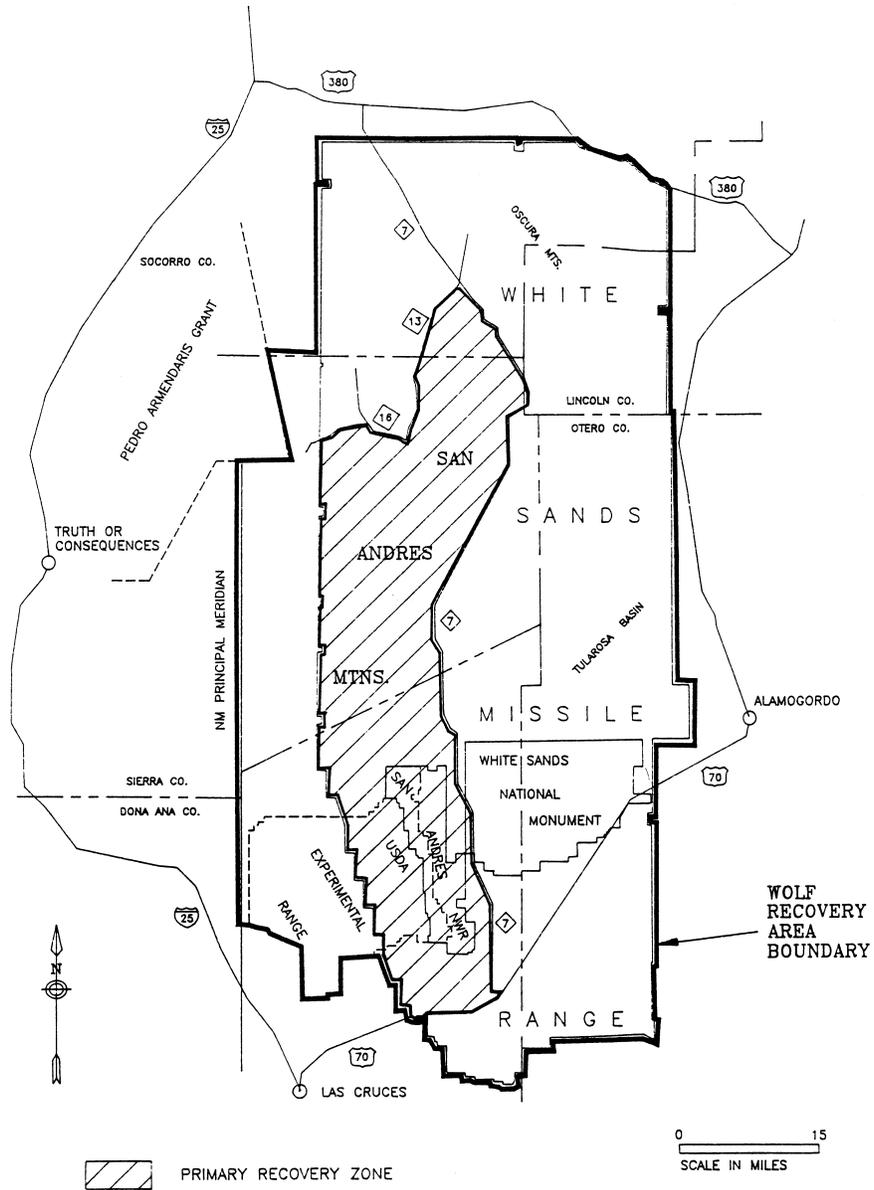
half) and the southern boundary of the Apache National Forest (western half); and on the west by the Greenlee-Graham County line (San Carlos Apache Reservation boundary). The Service will allow the wolf population to expand into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area “secondary recovery zone” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], which is the remainder of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area not in the primary recovery zone.

Fig. 1: Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area



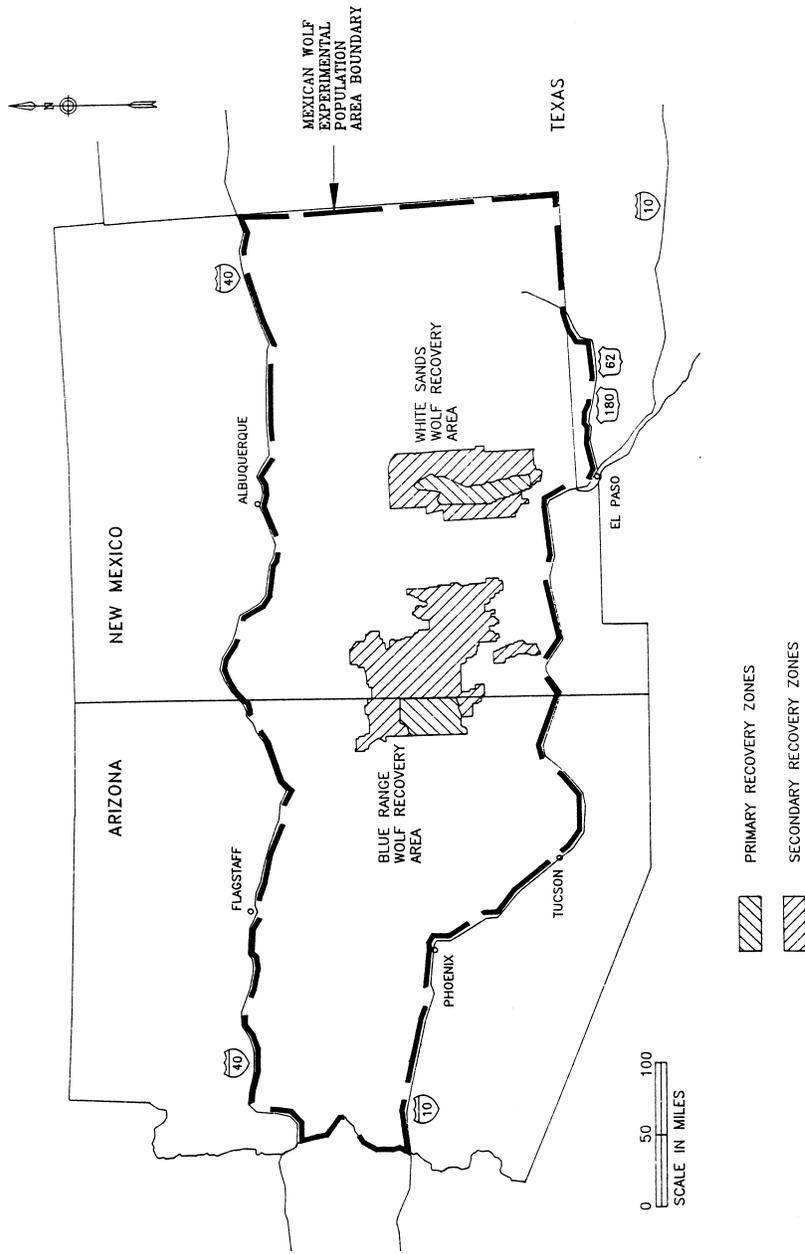
(ii) The White Sands Wolf Recovery Area in south-central New Mexico includes all of the White Sands Missile Range; the White Sands National Monument; the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge; and the area adjacent and to the west of the Missile Range bounded on the south by the southerly boundary of the USDA Jornada Experimental Range and the northern boundary of the New Mexico State University Animal Science Ranch, on the west by the New Mexico Principal Meridian, on the north by the Pedro Armendaris Grant boundary and the Sierra-Socorro County line, and on the east by the western boundary of the Missile Range (Figure 2). This is the back-up reintroduction area, to be used only if later determined to be both necessary and feasible in accordance with the Preferred Alternative as set forth in the FEIS on Mexican wolf reintroduction. If this area is used, initial releases of captive-raised wolves would take place within the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area primary recovery. This is the area within the White Sands Missile Range bounded on north by the road from the former Ranch Head quarters to Range Road Range Road 16 to its intersection Range Road 13, Range Road 13 to intersection with Range Road 7; on east by Range Road 7; on the south Highway 70; and on the west by Missile Range boundary. The Service would allow the wolf population to expand into the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area secondary recovery which is the remainder of the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area not in primary recovery zone.

Fig. 2: White Sands Wolf Recovery Area



(iii) The boundaries of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area are the portion of Arizona lying north of Interstate Highway 10 and south of Interstate Highway 40; the portion of New Mexico lying north of Interstate Highway 10 in the west, north of the New Mexico-Texas boundary in the east, and south of Interstate Highway 40; and the portion of Texas lying north of United States Highway 62/180 and south of the Texas-New Mexico boundary (Figure 3). The Service is not proposing wolf reestablishment throughout this area, but only within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, and possibly later in the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area, respectively described in paragraphs (k)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section. If a member of the nonessential experimental population is captured inside the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, but outside the designated wolf recovery areas, it will be re-released within the recovery area, put into the captive population, or otherwise managed according to provisions of a Service-approved management plan or action. If a wolf is found in the United States outside the boundaries of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (and not within any other wolf experimental population area) the Service will presume it to be of wild origin with full endangered status (or threatened in Minnesota) under the Act, unless evidence, such as a radio collar, identification mark, or physical or behavioral traits (see paragraph (k)(3)(x) of this section), establishes otherwise. If such evidence exists, the Service or an authorized agency will attempt to promptly capture the wolf and re-release it within the recovery area, put it into the captive population, or carry out any other management measure authorized by this rule or a Service-approved management plan. Such a wolf is otherwise not subject to this rule outside the designated Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

Fig. 3: Mexican Wolf Geographic Boundaries



(10) If Mexican wolves of the experimental population occur on public lands outside the designated wolf recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will attempt to capture any radio-collared lone wolf and any lone wolf or member of an established pack causing livestock “depredate” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. The agencies will not routinely capture and return pack members that make occasional forays onto public land outside the designated wolf recovery area(s) and uncollared lone wolves on public land. However, the Service will capture and return to a recovery area or to captivity packs from the nonessential experimental population that establish territories on public land wholly outside the designated wolf recovery area(s).

(11) If any wolves move onto private land outside the designated recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will develop management actions in cooperation with the landowner including capture and removal of the wolf or wolves if requested by the landowner.

(12) If any wolves move onto tribal reservation land outside the designated recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will develop management actions in cooperation with the tribal government including capture and removal of the wolf or wolves if requested by the tribal government.

(13) The Service will evaluate Mexican wolf reintroduction progress and prepare periodic progress reports, detailed annual reports, and full evaluations after 3 and 5 years that recommend continuation, modification, or termination of the reintroduction effort.

(14) The Service does not intend to change the “nonessential experimental” designation to “essential experimental,” “threatened,” or “endangered” and foresees no likely situation which would result in such changes. Critical habitat cannot be designated under the nonessential experimental classification, 16 U.S.C. 1539(j)(2)(C)(ii).

(15) Definitions. Key terms used in this rule have the following definitions.

*Breeding pair* means an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups during the previous breeding season that survived until December 31 of the year of their birth.

*Depredation* means the confirmed killing or wounding of lawfully present domestic livestock by one or more wolves. The Service, WS, or other Service- authorized agencies will confirm cases of wolf depredation on domestic livestock.

*Disturbance-causing land use activity* means any land use activity that the Service determines could adversely affect reproductive success, natural behavior, or survival of Mexican wolves. These activities may be temporarily restricted within a 1-mile radius of release pens, active dens, and rendezvous sites. Such activities may include, but are not

limited to—timber or wood harvesting, management-ignited fire, mining or mine development, camping outside designated campgrounds, livestock drives, off-road vehicle use, hunting, and any other use or activity with the potential to disturb wolves. The following activities are specifically excluded from this definition—

- (1) Legally permitted livestock grazing and use of water sources by livestock;
- (2) Livestock drives if no reasonable alternative route or timing exists;
- (3) Vehicle access over established roads to private property and to areas on public land where legally permitted activities are ongoing if no reasonable alternative route exists;
- (4) Use of lands within the national park or national wildlife refuge systems as safety buffer zones for military activities;
- (5) Prescribed natural fire except in the vicinity of release pens; and
- (6) Any authorized, specific land use that was active and ongoing at the time wolves chose to locate a den or rendezvous site nearby.

*Engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock* means to be engaged in the pursuit and grasping, biting, attacking, wounding, or feeding upon livestock that are alive. If wolves are observed feeding on a livestock carcass, you cannot assume that wolves killed the livestock because livestock can die from many causes and wolves will feed on carrion.

*Harass* means “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering” (50 CFR 17.3). This experimental population rule permits only “opportunistic, noninjurious harassment” (see definition below).

*Impact on game populations in ways which may inhibit further wolf recovery.* The Service encourages states and tribes to define unacceptable impacts from wolf predation on game populations in Service-approved management plans. Until such time the term will mean the following—2 consecutive years with a cumulative 35 percent decrease in population or hunter harvest estimates for a particular species of ungulate in a game management unit or distinct herd segment compared to the pre-wolf 5-year average (unit or herd must contain average of greater than 100 animals). If wolf predation is shown to be a primary cause of ungulate population declines (greater than 50 percent of documented adult or young mortality), then wolves may be moved to reduce ungulate mortality rates and assist in herd recovery, but only in conjunction with application of other common, professionally acceptable, wildlife management techniques.

*Livestock* means cattle, sheep, horses, mules, and burros or other domestic animals defined as livestock in State and Tribal wolf management plans approved by the Service.

*Occupied Mexican wolf range* means an area of confirmed presence of resident breeding packs or pairs of wolves or area consistently used by at least one resident wolf over a period of at least one month. The Service must confirm or corroborate wolf presence. Exact delineation of the area will be described by:

(1) 5-mile (8 km) radius around all locations of wolves and wolf sign confirmed as described above (nonradiomonitoring);

(2) 5-mile (8 km) radius around radio locations of resident wolves when fewer than 20 radio locations are available (for radio-monitored wolves only); or

(3) 3-mile (4.8 km) radius around the convex polygon developed from more than 20 radio locations of a pack, pair, or single wolf acquired over a period of at least 6 months (for radio-monitored wolves). This definition applies only within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

*Opportunistic, noninjurious harassment* (see “harass”) means as the wolf presents itself (for example, the wolf travels onto and is observed on private land or near livestock). This is the only type of harassment permitted by this rule. You cannot track, attract, search out, or chase a wolf and then harass it. Any harassment must not cause bodily injury or death to the wolf. The basic intent of harassment permitted by this rule is to scare wolves away from the immediate area. It is limited to approaching wolves and discharging firearms or other projectile launching devices in proximity to but not in the direction of wolves; throwing objects in the general direction of but not at wolves; or making any loud noise in proximity to wolves.

*Primary recovery zone* means an area where the Service—

- (1) Will release captive-raised Mexican wolves,
- (2) May return and re-release previously released Mexican wolves,
- (3) May release translocated wildborn Mexican wolves, and
- (4) Will actively support recovery of the reintroduced population.

*Problem wolves* means wolves that—

- (1) Have depredated lawfully present domestic livestock,

(2) Are members of a group or pack (including adults, yearlings, and young-of-the-year) that were directly involved in livestock depredations,

(3) Were fed by or are dependent upon adults involved with livestock depredations (because young animals will likely acquire the pack's livestock depredation habits),

(4) Have depredated domestic animals other than livestock on private or tribal lands, two times in an area within one year, or

(5) Are habituated to humans, human residences, or other facilities.

*Public land* means land under administration of Federal agencies including, but not limited to the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Department of Energy, and Department of Defense; and State-owned lands within the boundary of a designated wolf recovery area. All State-owned lands within the boundary of the experimental population area, but outside designated wolf recovery areas, will be subject to the provisions of this rule that apply to private lands.

*Rendezvous site* means a gathering and activity area regularly used by a litter of young wolf pups after they have emerged from the den. Typically, the site is used for a period ranging from about one week to one month in the summer. Several sites may be used in succession.

*Secondary recovery zone* means an area adjacent to a primary recovery zone in which the Service allows released wolves to disperse, where wolves captured in the wild for authorized management purposes may be translocated and released, and where managers will actively support recovery of the reintroduced population.

*Take* means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct" (16 U.S.C. 1532(19)). Also, see definitions of "harass", "opportunistic, noninjurious harassment", and "unavoidable and unintentional take."

*Unavoidable and unintentional take* means accidental, unintentional take (see definition of "Take") which occurs despite reasonable care, is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, and is not done on purpose. Examples would be striking a wolf with an automobile and catching a wolf in a trap outside of known occupied wolf range. Taking a wolf with a trap, snare, or other type of capture device within occupied wolf range (except as authorized in paragraph (k)(3)(ix) and (x) of this section) will not be considered unavoidable, accidental, or unintentional take, unless due care was exercised to avoid taking a wolf. Taking a wolf by shooting will not be considered unavoidable, accidental, or unintentional take. Shooters have the responsibility to be sure of their targets.

*Wolf recovery area* means a designated area where managers will actively support reestablishment of Mexican wolf populations.